

# The Anglican Digest

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## Lent

Lord, bless to me this Lent.

Lord, let me fast most truly and profitably,  
By feeding in prayer on the Spirit.

Reveal to me myself  
In the light of thy holiness.

Suffer me never to think  
that I have knowledge enough to need no teaching,  
wisdom enough to need no correction,  
talents enough to need no grace,  
goodness enough to need no progress,  
humility enough to need no repentance,  
devotion enough to need no quickening,  
strength sufficient without thy Spirit,  
lest standing still, I fall back for evermore.

Show me the desires that should be disciplines,  
And sloths to be slain.

Show me the omissions to be made up  
And habits to be mended.

And behind these, weaken, humble and annihilate in me  
Self-will, self-righteousness; self-satisfaction,  
Self-sufficiency, self-assertion, vainglory.

May my whole effort be to return to thee;  
O make it serious and sincere  
Preserving and fruitful in result,  
By the help of the Holy Spirit,  
And to thy glory,  
My Lord and my God.

## *Godly Living*

As we enter into the most holy season of Lent, the words of supplication from the collect for All Saints' Day come to mind. "Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you."

The well-known focus of Lent is to engage in the ascetical disciplines that lead us to acknowledge our sinfulness, our need to repent, and our preparation for the solemnities of Holy Week and Easter. Yet, it should be always our task to pursue "virtuous and godly living," because to live the Christian life with such integrity is to offer one's life as a gift to parish, to family, and to God. Indeed, the greatest gift a parish priest can offer is to pursue diligently the disciplines of the spiritual life, so as to lead their parish into the mysteries of God.

Like it or not, our most devout people are looking at their priests, silently asking, "If I am more holy than my priest, why am I going to this church?" Therefore, practice what you preach. Live in the faith and fear of God. Pray the Daily Office. Leave the piles on your desk, and walk into the church. Open your hearts to the enormity of God, and dare to feel just a bit less than worthy to celebrate the Sacraments. Refrain from idle chatter. Read chapter seven of the Rule of St. Benedict.

The Church of God does not need more jesters; she needs more earnestly devout priests. Pray that I, a sinner, may become one of them.

— The Rev. Alexander D.  
MacPhail, Christ Church,  
Gordonsville, Virginia



## Ashes

*Ash on an old man's sleeve  
Is all the ash the burnt roses  
leave.*

*Dust in the air suspended  
Marks the place where a  
story ended.*

— T.S. Eliot, *Little Gidding*

When I was a child all the grown-ups smoked. They leaned back in their chairs after dinner drinking coffee, smoking and talking. It was a ritual I came to expect and indeed observe very closely. My grandmother, who was rather elegant in every other way, didn't pay much attention to the cigarette dangling from her lips. I'd watch in fascination as the ash grew longer and longer, trembling slightly before it reached an impossible length and fell off onto her lap or dinner plate. Then there'd be a fuss, and she'd brush it off, sometimes smudging her clothes with the fine powdery ash.

The only other ashes I knew about were the ones left over from burning logs at campfires or in the fireplace.

These were gritty, chunky, and black. You would take a large burned piece and use it to write on the sidewalk. Later, the knowledge about ovens at Auschwitz and coal dust in miner's lungs would send a chill down my spine, a cold shiver of recognition. Death is real. I am mortal. So are the ones I love. We will all one day return to the earth.

Without much intentional effort we bring a deep appreciation of the gift of life to church on Ash Wednesday, when we kneel to receive the gritty ash of last year's burned palms. Even those who aren't Christian will recognize the smudge on our forehead as a sign that Mardi Gras is over, and that the ash is a sign of our intention to engage in the dirty work of the weeks ahead which are called Lent. We're sent into the season like soldiers into battle, wearing the dubious shield of an ashy cross to help us with the struggle of prayer and reflection.

Yet this thin emblem, which will be soon washed away, is a focus for the Lenten jour-

ney. There will be six weeks to contemplate the offering of god, incarnate in the trembling flesh of Christ, who bore the sacrificial weight upon his shoulders. Our own meager sacrifice is intentional and willing submission to the rigors of spiritual and religious discipline for a short time.

The weeks of Advent seem short. The weeks of Lent

seem long. At the end, when Easter arrives, we will still be mortal. But we will have been prepared for immortality by walking the way of Lent, following the footsteps of our Lord, and our souls will have been cleansed and refreshed by God's grace.

— The Rev. Anne Kelsey,  
Trinity, St. Louis, Missouri

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### Ash Wednesday

Once in winter,  
I stood.  
White flakes brushing my face  
With white fingers.  
I waited with the others  
We shivered on the steps —  
Stuck out our tongues to catch snowflakes  
So cold they would burn.  
Soon the big doors would open  
On smoke and candles  
and a cold thumb would brush  
My forehead with a cross of ashes.  
“Dust to Dust” he would mutter  
While snowflakes melted in my hair.

— Anonymous

## Vision

Vision is different things to different people. It is a measure of how we see: 20/20, 20/60 or some other combination. Vision can describe a universal concept or notion. We can have a vision of Truth, a vision of Beauty, a vision of Love.

In the Revelation, St. John the Evangelist wrote: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Revelation 21:1-2. This was his vision of the hope of heaven, where God will dwell with God's people and wipe away ever tear form their eyes. Death and mourning and crying will be no more, only life everlasting.

It seems to me that each of us has a vision of how "things" "should" be; our lives, our

relationships, our careers, our retirement, our church. It seems to me that vision can only emerge out of relationship with other human beings or institutions. In order for me to determine what my vision is, I need to establish the context, who will be involved and who will be affected, and what the desired outcome of this vision might be.

Our vision requires an inward turn before the outward formal vision can be articulated. We must answer the "why" before we put forth the "what." We must be clear about why we do anything at all, in this Christian life. The 'why, what, where, when, who' of any vision begins with our relationship with Jesus the Christ. He is our vision of peace, of healing, of mission, of community and hospitality in his name.

One of my favorite hymns in our Hymnal, is number 488. It is called "Be thou my vision" and the tune is an old

Irish one, called *Slane*. Its words are old-fashioned but speak of relationship, of desire and commitment.

*Be thou my vision,  
O Lord of my heart;  
All else be nought to me,  
save that thou art –  
Thou my best thought,  
by day or by night,  
Waking or sleeping,  
thy presence my light.*

*Be thou my wisdom,  
and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and  
thou with me, Lord;  
Thou my great Father;  
thine own may I be;  
Thou in me dwelling,  
and I one with thee.*

*High King of heaven,  
when victory is won,  
May I reach heaven's joys,  
bright heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my heart, –  
whatever befall,  
Still be my vision,  
O Ruler of all.*

— The Rev. Pamela  
Owen Strobel,  
Christ Church Greenwich,  
Greenwich, Connecticut

## *In Another Place*

Have you ever listened to a piece of music that was so beautiful it took your breath away? Have you ever been drawn to a piece of art that as you looked at it, brought tears to your eyes? Have you ever been stopped in your tracks by something in nature so startling in its loveliness that you felt a surge of joy? Have you ever been so "in" your game as an athlete that you performed flawlessly? Experiences like these take us to another place.

As a former Baptist, the question I am asked most frequently is, "What made you become an Episcopalian?" Sometimes I try to explain the challenges women in the Baptist church face. But that is not the real reason I became an Episcopalian. (I could just as easily have become a Methodist or a Presbyterian.) Sometimes I tell about meeting and marrying an Episcopal priest, but that's not the reason either.

I became an Episcopalian because in the Episcopal

Church I am taken to another place. I like the way Urban T. Homes, one-time dean of Sewanee, put it: "When Anglicanism is at its best, its liturgy, its poetry, its music and its life can create a world of wonder in which it is very easy to fall in love with God."

At first, as I sat through liturgies that were unfamiliar, tried to sing hymns that I didn't know, and filed haltingly up to the communion rail to receive the bread and wine, I didn't realize I was falling in love. But gradually, over the course of a couple of years, I began to recognize what was happening. I was being beckoned — perhaps even wooed — into a deeper life with God. And sometimes the music really is so beautiful it takes my breath away. And sometimes, as I press bread into the small, sweaty hands of a child, or into the knotted, arthritic hands of the aged, I get tears in my eyes. Sometimes the stained glass windows, the flowers, the vestments, the candles come together in

such a way that I really am in a different — a sacred — place.

Of course coming to church does not guarantee an encounter with the sacred anymore than a sunset guaranteed a lump pin the throat. But the *possibility* is always there. For God is always there, gently, patiently, hopefully waiting for our "yes" to God's offer of relationship. And I know that I want to live within the possibility, and I want to be surrounded by others who want to live there too.

I will always cherish my Baptist roots. It was in the Baptist church, after, that I was baptized, learned to love the bible, and heard a call to ordained life. But now I want to be taken more often to "another place." I want to fall deeper and deeper in love with God. And that is why I became an Episcopalian.

— The Rev. Deacon Eyleen Farmer, Calvary Church, Memphis, Tennessee

## Gothic Architecture

Just before the dawn of the age of Gothic architecture in the mid-twelfth century A.D., Christian church buildings in Europe were generally low, thickly walled, and dark. The walls were thick and low to support the weight of heavy stone barrel-vaulted ceilings. There was little natural light, as the ability of the walls to support weight would be jeopardized if pierced with too many windows. Geopolitical and natural forces also influenced the structures: heavy, thick stone walls and ceilings provided excellent protection for the churches and the precious relics they contained against fire and waves of plundering barbarians.

However, medieval Christians strongly believed that the church building – just as the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple – was meant to be an image of heaven where God dwells. They desired two things to portray that image: height and light. The Scriptures declare that God is

light (1 John 1:5b). Natural light, being pure and immaterial, best reflects God's divine and illuminating presence. Heaven is vast and limitless, thus great height in a church building would create that impression.

Sometime late in the eleventh century, an unknown builder in the northern Italian region of Lombardy decided to place diagonal stone "ribs" in a vaulted ceiling. In contrast to the earlier solid barrel shape, the stone ribs acted like a skeleton, dividing the vault into four



triangular compartments that could be filled with lighter material. Eventually, church builders adopted these ribbed vaulted ceilings and they became one of the major elements of Gothic church architecture. Because ribbed vaults were much lighter than stone barrel vaults, greater and greater building heights could be achieved.

Lighter ceilings also meant that the walls could be built thinner. Gothic churches and

cathedrals thus came to feature numerous large and beautiful stained glass windows, which allowed natural sunlight to pour inside and infuse them with a heavenly glow. Another of the characteristic features of Gothic architecture — the pointed arch — was incorporated into windows as well as ceilings, walls, compartments, and bays throughout the churches. The Gothic arch's height is not dictated by its width, therefore it, too, can soar to much greater heights than barrel-shaped Roman arches. Further support for soaring churches was provided by external "flying buttresses." All of these features first came together in church buildings in the area around Paris, France. From there the "new style" spread all over Europe and beyond. This style, which came to be known as Gothic, dominated church architecture for the next four hundred years.

While the Cathedral of St. Luke is not pure Gothic, it certainly contains most of the



elements, especially Gothic arches and flying buttresses. The Cathedral does not have a ribbed vaulted ceiling, though its interior height (approximately 55 feet from the floor) gives a wonderful impression of vastness. (The cathedral in Beauvais, France, achieved a staggering name height of almost 158 feet!) And the name "Gothic"? Ironically, it was not applied to the style until the Renaissance when Italians, despising it as barbaric, gave it the name of a barbarian tribe — the Goths. I hope you, like I, disregard the derogatory nature of the term and consider Gothic churches as some the most glorious and beautiful structures in the world. Gothic architecture's greatest contribution was not merely its advances in structural techniques, but rather the testimony to our Almighty and Holy God that gothic churches symbolize.

— Anne Michels, Cathedral Administrator, Cathedral Church of St. Luke, Orlando, Florida



### *The Cats of Hillspeak*

Treading their way through boxes of books,  
sniffing old volumes well-read,  
softly they purr in feline delight,  
happy and warm and well-fed.

For knowledge is power and humility too;  
books comfort both rich and poor . . .  
some in distant struggling lands,  
and some in the house next door.

The humans of Hillspeak bow to the cats;  
they acknowledge their ancient roles  
of guarding the walls of village and town  
and keeping the mice in their holes.

So as you browse these shelves, dear fold,  
take what you will and read.  
The cats of Hillspeak know your thoughts:  
they are creatures of God indeed.

— Barbara Rhodes  
Holiday Island, Arkansas

## D.Min. Program Begins Thirty-Third Year

The Doctor of Ministry Program of the University of the South begins its thirty-third year this summer.

The program is one of the few in the U.S. which operates only during the summer months so clergy can participate in the program without a major interruption in parish responsibilities. It affords an opportunity for students to study in an Episcopal seminary in a university setting.

The program stresses the relationship between the practice of ministry and biblical, historical, and theological knowledge. A Master of Sacred Theology program focusing on research skills is also available. The program usually takes three or four summers to complete.

The D.Min. program consists of 30 semester hours. Students are required to complete a major project, which is

a study of some dimension of one's ministry or the ministry of the church. Financial aid is available.

The dates for the Advanced Degree summer courses of 2007 are June 20 - July 11.

Courses offered this summer are "Ministry Seminar" by Dr. Donald Armentrout; "The Rhetoric of Jesus and the Rhetoric of Preaching" by Dr. William Brosend; "The Use of the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)" by Dr. Reginald Fuller; and "Hymnody of the Christian Church" by Dr. Marion Hatchett.

Inquiries about Advanced Degrees summer courses should be addressed to Don S. Armentrout, Advanced Degrees Program, School of Theology, 335 Tennessee Avenue, Sewanee, TN 37383-0001. Telephone 800-722-1974 for all of the above courses. The email address ([advdeg@sewanee.edu](mailto:advdeg@sewanee.edu)) and the web site: [theology.sewanee.edu](http://theology.sewanee.edu)

### *Three Holy Days Enfold Us Now*

Three holy days enfold us now  
in washing feet and breaking bread  
in cross and fond and life renewed  
In Christ, God's firstborn from the dead.

The myst'ry hid from ages past  
is here revealed in word and sign,  
for Jesus' story is our own:  
new life through death is God's design.

Christ lifted high upon the tree  
before you every knee shall bend  
and every tongue in praise proclaim:  
"You are the Lord of all. Amen."

Delores Dufner, OSB  
*Wonder, Love and Praise Hymnal #731*  
via St. Francis, Holden, Massachusetts

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- Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers, only to rise to wield power of life and death over them — learning that patience and integrity will win out in the end.

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Refreshing, *Wisdom in the Telling* is a collection of stories retold that reveal the universal experience of the human

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Creativity and truth  
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Using what we have  
Hospitality  
Being satisfied with our lives  
Remaining true to our dreams  
And more ...

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Of related interest:

*The Beauty of the Infinite*, by David Bentley Hart,

**Item E831T**, \$35

(for ordering information, turn page)



## Ash Wednesday

There is a great *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon where Calvin says to his tiger friend, Hobbes, "I feel bad that I called Susie names and hurt her feelings. I'm sorry I did it."

"Maybe you should apologize to her," Hobbes suggests. Calvin ponders this for a moment and replies, "I keep hoping there's a less obvious solution."

The prophet Joel spoke for the Lord in the eighth century before Christ. He served at a time when the people of Israel had troubles. The great days of David and Solomon were long behind them. They were under threat from foreign kings who might well conquer them and make them slave states. And at the particular time that Joel preached, there had been several devastating plagues of locusts, and famine was stalking the land. The people longed for what was called

"The Day of the Lord," when God would appear and vindicate his people, freeing them from oppression and trouble and making them the center of a kingdom of peace and plenty. They longed for the Day of the Lord, for it would be a day of blessing.

Joel issued a call to repentance. The solution to their problems, Joel said, was not simply in getting rid of locusts or of threatening foreign powers. Those things were real problems, but there were problems closer to home as well. If there were ever going to be a kingdom of peace and plenty, the people themselves needed to have pure hearts and full obedience to the Lord. Get rid of the locusts and of the armies of the neighboring kings, and there would still be problems. Indeed, the message of the prophets in the Old Testament was often that God sent plagues or armies to wake the people up and let them recognize that they had been disobedient to God's Law and needed to

repent and return to the Lord.

The message of Ash Wednesday is like that of Joel: even if the Lord got rid of all our external problems, we would still face troubles arising from our internal troubles. There can be no peace in our lives and no fullness of God's Kingdom until we have had our own hearts changed. Joel speaks of Israel making repentance their top priority: "Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep." (Joel 2:16c, 17a) Even the greatest joy of a life should be set aside, and the most solemn of religious duties be transformed, the Lord proclaims through Joel. Repentance and confession are needed before anything else.

Repentance is often regarded as simply feeling really rotten about something you have done. Calvin felt rotten after he had insulted Susie.

But his feelings were regret, not repentance. Real repentance is seen in the story of Rumeal Robinson, a basketball player for the University of Michigan. When Michigan played Wisconsin in basketball early in the season in 1989, Michigan's Rumeal stepped to the foul line for two shots late in the fourth quarter. His team trailed by one point, so Rumeal could regain the lead for Michigan. He missed both shots, allowing Wisconsin to upset favored Michigan.

Rumeal felt awful about costing his team the game, but his sorrow didn't stop at the emotional level. After each practice for the rest of the season, Rumeal shot one hundred extra foul shots. Thus, Rumeal was ready when he stepped to the foul line to shoot two shots with three seconds left in overtime in the national-championship game.

Swish went the first shot, and swish went the second. Those shots won Michigan

the national championship. Rumeal's repentance had been genuine, and sorrow motivated him to work so that he would never make that mistake again. As Paul wrote, "Godly sorrow leads to repentance" (2 Cor. 7:10).

We have the need to repent. We also have the freedom to repent, for God has promised to accept us. 2 Cor 5: 21 tells us, "For our sake, [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." God does not forgive us on the basis of how miserable we have felt, nor on how hard we work to change. He forgives us on the basis of the death of Christ, for on the cross, Jesus identified himself with our sins and suffered the just penalty our sins deserve. Through Jesus, we are forgiven and restored, and God calls us "righteous," with all the goodness of the Lord Jesus to our credit.

Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins

from us." How far is that? It is beyond calculating. Do you know how far that is? Truth is, it can't even be measured. Consider a globe of the earth: east and west are actually further apart than the north and south. If I were to start here in North America and go north, eventually I would get to the top of the globe at the North Pole. If I were to continue the same direction, I would start going south. North and south are 12,000 miles apart, no further. But if I start in Massachusetts and keep going east, when will I start going west? Never. The psalmist says God will remove our sin from us — not as far as the north is from the south, but as far as the east is from the west.

We are entering Lent, a season of repentance. It is a serious season, but it is not meant to be a time of misery. Rather, it is to be a time of looking to our own hearts, seeing where we fail to do what God has asked us, or where we have done what

God has asked us not to do, and acknowledging our responsibility in the failure. Such a confession can be painful, but it need not be fearful, for we know from 2 Corinthians and Psalm 103 that God stands ever ready to forgive and to empower us to change.

In the comics, Calvin remains a self-centered kid who knows that it is wrong to throw snowballs at Susie or to insult her — yet who never does more than to have a twinge of conscience from time to time. He regrets, but he does not repent. Through Jesus Christ, we know that we can turn to God and receive both the mercy of forgiveness and the grace of the Holy Spirit to grow into the likeness of the One who died for us.

To our merciful Lord be glory now and evermore.  
AMEN.

The Rev. Charles F.  
Sutton, Jr., Trinity Church  
Whitinsville, Massachusetts

## Welcome...

To our newest Trustee, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Jeffrey N. Steenson, Bishop of the Diocese of Rio Grande. Bishop Steenson holds degrees from Trinity College, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School, and the University of Oxford where he earned the Ph.D.

He was lecturer in Anglican Theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in 1985-1986. He was also tutor and Adjunct in Theology at General Theological Seminary. From 1985 to 1989, he served as rector, Good Shepherd, Rosemont.

In 1989 he became rector of St. Andrew's, Fort Worth, Texas and in 2000 became Canon to the Ordinary in the Diocese of Rio Grande. He was elected Bishop Coadjutor in 2004 and seated as Bishop in 2005.

Bishop Steenson also serves on the Board of Directors of The Living Church Foundation.

*Thesis from a Seminary Door . . .*

## "Bunker Hill Bunny"



There is a classic *Looney Tunes* short from the year 1950, in which Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam battle it out, one to one, during the American Revolution. This is a madcap depiction of war, light and non-ideological, and it ends with Bugs winning and Yosemite Sam admitting, "I'm a Hessian/ Who's lost all his aggression."

I see this "Merry Melody" from the classic Warner

Brothers period of pop animation as a tribute to our church struggle, our endless church struggle, which is kind of petering out after last June in Columbus and also the many follow-up meetings. Guns are still going, and the trenches are still there. But the fronts have changed so much that it's hard to know the players anymore.

For myself, the whole thing has become absurd. I do not mean "absurd" in the sense of "stupid" or "meaningless." Rather, I mean "absurd" in the sense of funny and chaotic and subversive. People call me and ask me if Trinity can now train American candidates for holy orders in an African diocese for service in ... Virginia. Old friends are falling off the fence into the arms of the Anglican Mission in America, never to be heard from again. Yankees are getting ordained in South America for service in Connecticut.



*Remember man  
that you are  
dust and into  
dust you shall  
return.*

This constant shifting of fronts within Anglican jurisdictional life, and the massive consequent confusion of the everyday laity, makes life for us all, in this church, absurd. It is funny, and kind of sad; futile, and kind of like sand falling through your fingers; unpredictable, and kind of bitter, too. It is absurd.

My question is, after over thirty years of this, is it possible to retain hope, and I mean Christian Hope, Resurrection Hope, in the garish red "Merrie Melodies" light that now suffuses us all if we but look? Is it possible to hope any more? Where is Hope? Where is Christian Hope?

Well, I still have some. But it is not hope in the church, institutionally speaking. It is still in the Man from Galilee. It is in his teachings, it is in his Love, it is in his Sacrifice, and it is in his "Neither do I condemn thee" Easter morning. I still get goose bumps in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, both 'upstairs' on the Calvary and 'downstairs' in the sepulcher itself. I think I understand why Blessed John Paul II wanted that extra 30 min-

utes in the Sepulcher at the tail end of his visit to Jerusalem in the year 2000.

So again, as always so now, it is back to the Fountain, back to the Center, back to the starting line of our Christian faith. The human vessels for this are, simply put - and we simply cannot deny it if we have been participants or close observers in the meltdown of The Episcopal Church - *absurd*. But Jesus Christ was not absurd. He actually did what he wanted to do. His "Yes" was always "Yes," and never "Yes" and "No." And I, for one, still feel like a beneficiary.

— The Very Rev. Dr.theol.  
Paul F.M. Zahl,  
Dean/President, Trinity  
Episcopal School for  
Ministry, Ambridge,  
Pennsylvania



## *Lent, a Time for Confession*

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1 Jn. 1:8-10)

Thomas Hopko wrote in his book *The Lenten Spring* that confession is a part of the spiritual life. "There is no authentic existence for human beings without it. And there is certainly no authentic repentance."

Of all the sacraments made available to us through the church, sacramental confession is the most underused and most misunderstood. Each Lent I write my Top Ten Lenten Suggestions.

Some would argue that there is no need to do that. We have the "General Confession" we say together each time we celebrate the Holy Eucharist. But that is the point, it is general! In early

times confession was open and public. The argument was and in some cases continues to be, "I can confess directly to God, I don't need a priest or a public forum."

But confession to God in secret is no confession at all but simply the acknowledgement before the Lord that we know what he knows! Confession by definition is open and public. Otherwise it is not confession. When the people queued up to repent as a means of preparing for the coming of Jesus at the preaching of John Baptist, St. Mark says they were baptized "confessing their sins." (Mk. 1:5)

They were not telling God in private what he already knew. Instead they were proclaiming the evils they had done for all to hear down by the Jordan River. St. James likewise commands that Christians "confess their sins to one another" (Jas 6:16). It is not a suggestion James is making but a command that as Christians we reveal our wickedness to each other so

that we might be healed. Sacramental Confession is a healing sacrament: It heals the soul of those sins which weigh heavily upon it.

If confession is by definition open and public acknowledgement of sins, why then does the church direct the penitent to seek out a priest to confess in private? Priests have no power to forgive sin; only God can do that. True, but the priest's role is to witness the confession and to prescribe when necessary an appropriate penance. More importantly, the priest is present to assure God's forgiveness through the prayer of absolution. It is public in the sense that the priest represents the community of faith as the spiritual head and the sacramental presence within it of Christ himself. The sacramental priesthood is a sharing in Christ's priesthood.

Lent is a time for confession. If this would be your first confession I suggest that you speak to someone about the proper preparation. If

you own a *Saint Augustine's Prayer Book*, for example, there is a wonderful model for self-examination beginning on page 113. Tracts on self-examination and confession are also available.

“Behold, my child, Christ stands here invisibly and receives your confession . . . I am but a witness, bearing testimony before him of the things which you shall conceal anything you shall have the greater sin. Take heed, therefore, lest having come to the physician, you depart unhealed.” (Exhortation of the confessor to the penitent in the Rite of Confession — Slavonic version).

— The Rev. Canon Gregg L.  
Riley, Grace Church,  
Monroe, Louisiana

[www.anglicandigest.org](http://www.anglicandigest.org)

## A Good Friday Meditation

The Feast of the Annunciation reminds us of the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary to tell her that she will bear God's child. Imagine her first reaction: she is a virgin and betrothed to Joseph the carpenter. She looks forward to a simple life as a carpenter's wife, nothing more. Suddenly she learns that she will give birth to a baby boy who will be both man and God. What a tremendous responsibility falls on Mary. We might say, what a tremendous burden falls on her. After she wonders, "What will people think?" she has to consider the solemnity of raising a divine son. What will his life be like? What is in store the whole family? What trials and tribulations will he have to bear? Gabriel has said that Jesus would reign over the house of David. Mary would have known what difficulties kings faces, and this king, her son, would certainly encounter extraordinary challenges, since he was also born of God. Nevertheless, Mary

says yes to God. She says to Gabriel, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to thy word."

Mary knows how special her charge is. In her song the *Magnificat*, she sings, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant." She also knows that what will come is going to be most unusual and will turn the world topsy-turvy: "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty." Her words foreshadow those of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and in

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his teachings of "the last shall be first."

On Good Friday, Jesus is crucified, dead, and buried. If Mary were here with us now, she would no doubt be weeping at this cruel irony: she watched her son die while thinking "Some thirty years ago, I was just finding out that you would be born." Remember that old Simeon in the temple had told Mary that a sword would pierce her soul. Today, while the sword pierces Jesus' side, Mary's soul is pierced, as is ours. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" cries Jesus. God remains silent. Today there is no announcement by either God or an angel. Today Jesus' mother must watch in agony while her son dies a slow and agonizing death. She must be remembering his humble birth, his first laugh, his first steps, his adolescence, and his wonderful adult life of ministry, including miracles, the first one of which Mary gently nudged him to perform. She must have been so proud of him. Mary was with her son all through his life,

and she is with him today as he dies. The particular anguish of a mother must be known only to mothers who have lost children.

From the cross, Jesus gives Mary a new son, the beloved disciple. Jesus thus makes the necessary arrangements for his mother's care before he leaves her.

At the foot of the cross, we weep with Mary and we weep for ourselves, that our Lord had to suffer such pain. We also know, however, what the people at the scene of the Crucifixion did not yet realize: that on Sunday, we will celebrate the truth of the Resurrection: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, and the promise of resurrection for Mary, for all the disciples, and for all of us. Gabriel's announcement to Mary, God's silence, Jesus' last breath of human life, all will turn to "Alleluia" on Easter morning. But first we must weep for our God who loved us enough to die for us.

— The Rev. Mary-Kathleen  
Blanchard, St. Paul's,  
Augusta, Georgia

## *The Virtue Of Courtesy*

We may be seeing the first signs of spring – snowdrops and catkins – but the leaden skies and dank days of February can depress the spirits.

In terms of headlines this month began with questions of prurience and privacy about those competing for political leadership. Hard on the heels of this discussion came the protests in the Islamic world sparked by the Danish cartoons of the prophet Muhammad. Alongside issues of prurience and privacy have been concerns about freedom and religion, about culture, reverence and respect on the one hand, and the right of free comment, mockery, satire, and caricature on the other.

It is worth noting that in late 19th-century England the secularist magazine, *The Freethinker*, published a series of comic biblical sketches and blasphemous Bible cartoons, crudely caricaturing God and Jesus but in a virulently anti-Semitic way that would

nowadays not be tolerated. We may no longer live in a culture of deference, but there are still serious questions to be raised about a culture of brash assertiveness insensitive to the virtues of reverence and courtesy.

These questions are well worth pondering as we stand on the verge of Lent. The 40 days of Lent leading up to Holy Week and Easter were originally days of penitence in preparation for the great baptism celebrated on Easter night, the night of the Lord's passover from death to life, the moment when the new creation dawned.

Later, to this preparation for baptism was joined a time of penitence for those whose sins had cut them off from the source of life and grace. The way of repentance was the way of renewal, and Lent – the Old English word means "springtime", the time when the days begin to lengthen as green shoots push their way through the seemingly dead soil of winter – was the springtime of the soul.

Lent summons us to take stock, to a penitence and contrition which demand our self-examination in the light of Christ. In the early Church public penitence became all too easily an occasion for scandal and gossip, so, wisely, the penitence that was rightly required in acknowledging sin and failure became properly private. Penitence was quite rightly not something to be placarded publicly, but needed to be expressed in the security and confidentiality made possible by wise spiritual guides and counsellors.

The confidentiality rightly required of contemporary counsellors was anticipated long before in the seal of the confessional, and doctors of the soul are rightly those who minister God's grace, healing and forgiveness, through their own receiving of that forgiveness and the knowledge of divine wisdom.

The brash assumptions that all have "the right to know," and that everything can be published "in the public interest" damage not just those whose personal priva-

cy is violated but also all of us tainted by an insatiable appetite for prurient tittle-tattle. It was Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, who wisely (and perhaps surprisingly) wrote at the time of the Wolfenden report on homosexuality in 1957 that there was "a realm which is not the law's business, a sacred area of privacy where people make their choices and decisions, fashion their characters; asserting their own rights and liberties into which the law generally speaking must not intrude".

We could say that Fisher's comment was a wise example of the outworking of courtesy — an old-fashioned virtue which no society sensitive to human flourishing can afford to despise. It was a virtue championed by that remarkable 14th-century mystic, Julian of Norwich, who wrote that God himself was "very courtesy" who in that courtesy brings us to the knowledge of our sin by the light of his mercy.

It is that courtesy which is rooted in respect for and sen-

sitivity towards each other that tempers the assertion of rights to freedom and comment. A series of crude cartoons serves little to enable courtesy. We would do well to remember, in an age when easy speeches are made equating religion with violent, assertive fanaticism, that the two great and essential commandments that Jesus taught his disciples were the love of God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, and the love of our neighbour as ourselves.

If we are to love in such a way we need the grace of that courteous God who sustains and keeps us, pouring the very life of his Spirit into our hearts that we may bring forth the fruits of the spirit, which are, in St. Paul's words: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. To grow in these graces is a challenge not just for Lent but for a lifetime.

— The Rt. Rev. Geoffrey Rowell, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe

## *Why all the Ashes?*

I was lucky enough to be in one of Professor Frederick Shriver's classes at General Seminary before he retired. I recall Father Shriver's (not one to keep his opinions to himself) thoughts about ashes. "You know what I'd do if I were the rector of a church?" he asked our class. I'll tell you what I'd do. At the end of the Ash Wednesday liturgy, I'd be at the back door with a big washrag. As people left the church, I'd wipe the ashes off their forehead and remind them of the words of our Lord, "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them" (Matthew 6:1).

Given this strong criticism of outward piety and given that we will offer ashes on Ash Wednesday, we might ask ourselves, "Why all the ashes? Because ashes are a sign, a reminder, and ashes are an invitation.

Archaeologists tell us the people of Israel were not

alone in using ashes in rituals of purification. Ashes appear in Phoenician burial art and Arabic expressions. Ashes were a sign of grief, mourning, humiliation, and penitence. When Job loses everything, he sits among the ashes. Cursed and overrun by enemies, the Psalmist "eats ashes like bread, and minglest tears with drink." Ashes are what are left after destruction. After chaos or catastrophe, ashes remain.

Ashes also remind us of a common origin. The second chapter of Genesis tells of how we were created from the dust of the ground. Though we may spend our lives trying to distinguish ourselves from others, running after success and trying to feel different from others, the dust and ashes remind us that we are all made of the same stuff. We are reminded not only of our beginning but also of our end. On the First Day of Lent, ashes are imposed with the words, "Remember that you are

dust, and to dust you shall return." Those words apply to us all.

While ashes may signify and remind, they also invite. They invite us to repentance. They invite us to turn again to God and to receive new life. Isaiah brings glad tidings to the people of Israel, "to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning." They begin a season that moves us through silence and longing into a season of joy and resurrection.

May the ashes we receive be a sign of humility and penitence. May they remind us of our individual sins and the complexity of corporate sin. But more than anything, may the ashes invite us into God's presence, into God's love and into God's gift of new life.

— The Rev. John  
Beddingfield, via  
*Angelus On Line Newsletter,*  
St. Mary the Virgin,  
New York, New York



## HILLSPEAKING

NEVER in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would type these words, but here goes: Please do NOT send books, clericals, tapes, or vestments to Operation Pass Along at Hillspeak .... until after Easter Day!

Those of you who have visited Hillspeak know that we operate with a very small staff (six employees and a more-or-less full time volunteer). You may have also noticed that the Cold Room (a no-heat storage room, hence the name) is chock-a-block with cartons of books, vestments, and the like.

We have fallen 'way behind in the processing of books.

Here is the reason: Each book must be handled a minimum of three times:

1) when the books are received and taken out of their packaging and counted (so we can send the donor a receipt);

2) each book is compared with the Pass Along request list to determine if somebody has asked for it (there are, at this writing, 3,517 requests on file);

3) the book is either packaged to be sent to a requester (718 individual requesters) or it is shelved (19,878 on the shelves) and the title, author, and shelf number are entered into the Pass Along data base.

Clericals, tapes, and vestments go through a similar process.

That all takes a bit of doing and is time consuming.

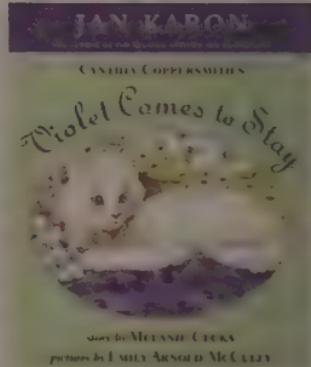
A brief moratorium will allow us to catch up with our processing and as a result better serve you and the Church. Bear with us and we will soon be adding to those 171,722 books and 5,425 vestment items that have been passed along.

— *The Trustees' Warden*

## WE RECOMMEND

[These books are NOT available through  
The Anglican Bookstore.]

*Violet Comes to Stay* by Jan Karon (Penguin Young Readers). Jan Karon is the author of three books for children and the bestselling Mitford Years books. *Violet Comes to Stay* is the first in a series of storybooks inspired by Cynthia Coppersmith, Father Tim's wife from Jan Karon's bestselling Mitford Years series. Readers will love this timeless story about the endearing white kitten named Violet, charmingly written by Melanie Cecka and beautifully illustrated by award-winning artist Emily Arnold McCully. Karon searched for three years to find a storytelling voice and art style authentic to Cynthia Coppersmith and was personally involved in every step of the creation of this book. In *Violet Comes to Stay*, Violet's search for the perfect home leads her to a plant nursery, a bakery, and finally a bookstore — the one place where the gentle cat isn't expected to be a mouse hunter. ISBN: 0670060739, \$16



*The New Testament and Literature* by Stephen Cox (Open Court Books). Stephen Cox is Professor of Literature and Director of the Humanities Program at the University of California, San Diego. The New Testament is perhaps the most influential book in the world from both an intellectual and literary standpoint. Still, few readers understand how to read the New Testament as a piece of literature.

*The New Testament and Literature* acts as a guide, focusing on the underlying patterns that combine ideas with literary devices. The book identifies the literary formulas in the New Testament and shows how these elements have shaped English and American literature. ISBN: 0812695917, \$37

*When God Walks Away: A Companion to the Dark Night of the Soul* by Kaye McKee (Crossroad Publishing). *When God Walks Away* explores and celebrates one of faith's great mysteries. McKee accompanies Jesus through his surrender, into suffering to death and into the surprise of Resurrection. Each reflection begins with an image for the night, and then explores that image with examples from scripture, personal experience, literature, music, and Christian history. This narrative is accessible to any Christian, including a broad spectrum of believers who have no previous experience with classic Christian spirituality and mysticism. Topics include: A Brilliant Darkness, The Call to Surrender, The Severe Mercy of Suffering, The Night Visitor, Resurrection Surprise, Further Up and Further In. ISBN: 0824523806, \$17



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## † Deaths †

† THE REV. FLEETWOOD JAMES ALBRECHT, 82, in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. Ordained a deacon in 1961 and priest in 1962, Fr. Albrecht served parishes in South Carolina and West Virginia. He also served as an examining chaplain in the Diocese of South Carolina.

† WILLIAM G. ANDERSEN, JR., 71, in Maplewood, New Jersey. Mr. Andersen was former executive director of the Episcopal Church Foundation. He joined the Foundation in 1987 and served as its executive director from 1992 until 2005. He received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Berkeley Divinity School at Yale in 2005. He was a member and leader at St. George's Church in Maplewood and in the Diocese of Newark.

† THE REV. STEPHEN D. CARTER, SSC, 79, in Columbus, Mississippi. Fr. Carter served parishes in Texas and Mississippi from his ordination in 1953 until his retirement in 1991. He also served

for a period as headmaster of St. John's Day School in Laurel, Mississippi.

† THE REV. WARREN H. DAVIS, JR., in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. Fr. Davis, a noted jazz pianist, was ordained in 1953 and served as chaplain at the Seamen's Church Institute in Philadelphia for three years before taking parish ministries in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. He served at St. Christopher's, Gladwyne, from 1965 until retirement in 1991.

† THE REV. CANON RUDOLF DEVIK, 82, in Tacoma, Washington. A graduate of Seabury-Western, Canon Devik, was ordained in 1953 in the Diocese of Iowa. He served parishes in Iowa, Massachusetts, and the Diocese of Olympia where he was archdeacon from 1964 to 1972.

† MRS. ETHELWYNNE HATCH KUHAR, 89, in Gainesville, Florida. Born to one of the first families to settle Everett, Washington, Ethelwynne, lived in Arizona and New

Mexico before settling in Florida. She served as church secretary for many years at St. Dunstan's, Largo, and St. Vincent's in St. Petersburg before retiring to Gainesville.

† THE REV. HENRY CLAY MAYER, 78, in Lexington, Kentucky. Ordained in 1968, he served parishes in Kentucky, Florida, and Texas. He was an associate of the Community of the Transfiguration and a chaplain for Daughters of the King in Florida and Lexington.

† THE REV. CANON ROBERT W. OFFERLE, CSSS, 68, in Stuart, Florida. He was installed as a Canon in St. Peters Cathedral, Diocese of Korfuridua, Ghana, West Africa, in 2003. He did missionary work in Africa and Panama and traveled the U.S. preaching for food for the poor. He served parishes in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, St. John's, and Florida. He was a member of Confraternity of the Blessed Sacraments, an associate of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor, a Priest of the Holy

House, Walsingham, the American Chaplain General of the Society of Mary, and Father Master of the Congregation of the Companions of the Holy Savior.

† THE REV. CANON EDGAR BOLLING ROBERTSON, 87, in Liberia, West Africa. Ordained in 1943, Canon Robertson served as missioner to the Church of the Province of West Africa in Liberia from 1944 until retiring in 1986.

† THE REV. DR. EDGAR D. ROMIG, 84, in Washington, D.C. Ordained a deacon in 1951 and priest in 1952, Dr. Romig served parishes in Massachusetts until 1964 when he became rector of Church of the Epiphany, Washington, D.C. He served there until retiring in 1992. He also served the Diocese of Washington

† THE REV. DR. KRISTIN ALINE ERLENDON SUNDQUIST, 63, in Saratoga, California. A well-recognized concert organist in the Bay Area, Dr.

Sundquist served in the Diocese of El Camino Real since her ordination to the diaconate in 1988 and to the order of priests in 1989.

† THE REV. CANON DONALD R. WOODWARD, 93, in Exeter, New Hampshire. Ordained deacon and priest in 1940, he served parishes in Vermont, Kansas, and New York. He was dean of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, from 1958 to 1968 and vicar of Trinity, Wall Street, New York from 1968 to 1972.

† THE REV. G. ALFRED WRAY, JR., 64, in Norfolk, Virginia. Ordained to the diaconate in 1993, he served several Diocese of Southern Virginia parishes until 2003 when he was ordained a priest. He then served as rector of St. Stephen's, Norfolk, and as a member of the Board of Mission and Ministry of the diocese until his death.

*Rest eternal, grant unto them  
O Lord,  
and let light-perpetual shine  
upon them.  
May they Rest in Peace and  
Rise in Glory.*



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*A Lenten Hymn*

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;  
 bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
 leave to thy God to order and provide;  
 in every change he faithful will remain.

Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend  
 through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake  
 to guide the future as he has the past.

Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;  
 all now mysterious shall be bright at last.

Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know  
 his voice who ruled them while he dwelt below.

Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart,  
 and all is darkened in the vale of tears,  
 then shalt thou better know his love, his heart,  
 who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.

Be still, my soul: thy Jesus can repay,  
 from his own fullness, all he takes away.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on  
 when we shall be forever with the Lord,  
 when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,  
 sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.

Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,  
 all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

— von Schlegel, Hymn 68, *Hymns Old & New*,  
*Complete Anglican Edition*, 2000

## About the Hymn

The text in its originally German was written by the poet Katharina Amalia Dorothea von Schlegel in the town of Köthen, a small town in central Germany not far from Leipzig. It was an independent Duchy from the 17th through 19th centuries. Johann Sebastian Bach was musical director in the ducal court from 1717 to 1723 (where he wrote the *Brandenburg Concerts* and *The Well-Tempered Clavier*). Katharina von Schlegel was also likely attached to the ducal court in Köthen and served as canoness of an evangelical women's seminary. She wrote during a reformation in the church called the Pietistic Revival in Germany, similar to the Puritan and Wesleyan movements in England. The Pietistic movement gave birth to many German hymns, including more than twenty by von Schlegel.

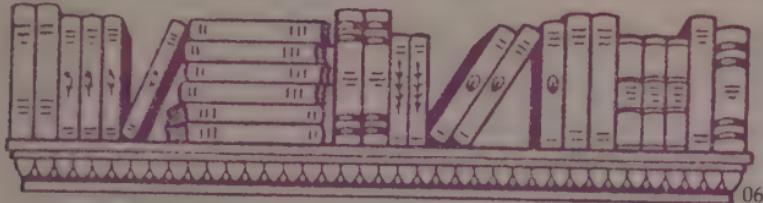
This hymn was reportedly a favorite of Eric Liddell, the athlete who became famous in the 1924 Olympics

for refusing to run on the Sabbath (as immortalized in the movie *Chariots of Fire*). Liddell later became a missionary in China, and was imprisoned during World War II. He is said to have taught this hymn to others in the prison camp (where he eventually died of a brain tumor).

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# CREAM OF THE CROP



The Anglican Book Club is offering *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, by Miroslav Volf, for the Spring selection. Dr. Volf is the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School.

If our Father is in heaven and heaven is our ultimate destiny then reflecting from heaven back to earth is part of the Christian's call. Volf does just that with a surprising subject in *The End of Memory*. "My thesis is simple," Volf writes, "memories of suffered wrongs will not come to the minds of the citizens of the world to come, for in it they will perfectly enjoy God and one another in God...For many my thesis will touch a raw nerve — as it does for me!" Enjoy this rich work as the author wrestles with the richness of the Christian tradition, the thought of Freud, Luther, and Kierkegaard, among others, as well as his own memories of being interrogated in Yugoslavia.

— Kendall S. Harmon +

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## *The Discipline of Silence and Solitude*

*O Lord, I am not proud;  
I have no haughty looks.  
I do not occupy myself with  
great matters, or with  
things that are too hard for  
me.*

*But I still my soul and make  
it quiet, like a child upon  
its mother's breast; my  
soul is quieted within me.*

*O Israel, wait upon the Lord,  
from this time forth for  
evermore.*

Psalm 131, easily my favorite of all the psalms, reminds the reader that there is no work more important than sitting with the Lord in stillness and quiet. Much attention has been paid of late to the matter of our financial stewardship and the opportunity of offering a goodly percentage of our money to the Lord. Time is perhaps an even more valuable resource and there is, for the faithful Christian, the duty and privilege of offering a goodly per-

centage of our time to the Lord.

We may give of our time in various ways. — study, outreach to the needy, prayer, fasting, devotional readings — but a discipline unwisely ignored is that of silence and solitude. Each day it is meet and right to offer to the Lord a portion of my time in which I simply sit in his presence and steep myself in his love. For those with a more complicated approach to life the question arises, "What am I to do in that time of solitude?", and probably the only answer is that one learns what to do and what not to do as he comes to solitude more regularly.

For the crowded and cluttered, often the only time of silence is just before sleep. The days are spent in acting and reacting in the various circumstances, those days suddenly accumulating into years where one wonders just what has happened with all that time. For those willing to devote a portion of the day to sitting quietly in the

Lord's presence there is increased peace and acceptance as the meaning of life is more consistently visited.

This discipline begins with being quiet but involves growth in our ability to listen. Those more mature in such a practice seem always more clear about what it is they are to do and avoid doing. Decisions and actions then flow from peace and clarity and are less often desperate attempts to gain control. The plan for us is made clear over time, or at least the understanding that there is a plan for us even if we do not know all the details, and then we are more able to be faithful in the parts assigned to us. Here we learn to wait upon the Lord and then act.

The discipline begins with being alone but involves growth in our ability to be in the company of the Lord. Some who are alone for most of their time have not yet learned the potential of solitude. If one spends his alone times bitterly focused on the lack of attention he is receiv-

ing from others, he has not touched solitude, merely loneliness. The discipline of silence and solitude is the practice of seeking the Lord's company above all else and quietly putting aside worries and anxieties. Here we learn to trust and know we are loved.

Perhaps nothing I have done as a parent is more important than those early times of holding and rocking and the ongoing times of silently appreciating the lives of my children. And perhaps no other work as a child of God is more important than allowing my Lord to hold me. Of all the ways of discipline, do not leave off silence and solitude. There you will find acceptance of what life brings you.

—The Rev. Robert C. Wisnewski, Jr.,  
St. John's,  
Montgomery, Alabama



## Sunday School Humor

### The Good Samaritan

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed, and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then, she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

### Story of Elijah

The Sunday school teacher was carefully explaining the story of Elijah the Prophet and the false prophets of Baal. She explained how Elijah built the altar, put wood upon it, cut the steer in pieces and laid it upon the altar. And then, Elijah commanded the people of God to fill four barrels of water and pour it over the altar. He had them do this four times. "Now," said the teacher, "can anyone in the class tell me why the Lord would have Elijah pour water over the steer on the altar?" A

little girl in the back of the room started waving her hand, "I know, I know," she said, "to make the gravy!"

### Lot's Wife

The Sunday school teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Johnny interrupted, "My Mummy looked back once, while she was DRIVING," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

### Did Noah Fish?

A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?" "No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms."

### Higher Power

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in bible times. But, there is a high power. Can anybody tell me what it is? One child blurted out, "Aces!"

### Sunday School

Nine-year-old Joey was

asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday school. "Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then, he used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved." "Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his mother asked. "Well, no, Mom, but, if I told it that way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

### The Lord Is My Shepherd

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the bible: Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the verse. Little Bobby was excited about the task. But, he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Bobby was so nervous! When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my shepherd and that's all I need to know!"

— via *The Parish Gazette*,  
St. John's, Passaic, New Jersey

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### About the cover

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Detail from *The Last Supper* by Fra Angelico (1387-1455), St Mark's Chapel, Florence. Born around 1387 as Guido di Pietro in Vicchio, Tuscany (near Florence), Fra Angelico was a pious, holy man, who managed to combine the life of a Dominican friar with that of an innovative, professional artist. Though his early training was in manuscript illumination, he is best known for his frescoes, done in everything from monks' cells to a Vatican chapel. The Fra was influenced by the Florentine School through Gentile da Fabriano and Masaccio. His painting of the Last Supper was done in 1442. Fra Angelico was beatified in 1984, and named patron saint of artists by Pope John Paul II.

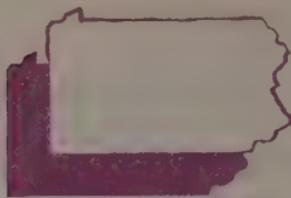
## *Letter to the Editor*

It is with much pleasure that I open each new edition of THE ANGLICAN DIGEST. I was therefore, greatly distressed when I read the article on "Episcopal Martyrs," which unfortunately contains a number of errors, two of which are serious. As a long-time member of St. Mary's Cathedral in Memphis, as the Historiographer & Archivist of the diocese of West Tennessee, and as a published author on the history of the yellow fever epidemics in Memphis, I know this history as well as I know that of my own family. I do not know what source(s) the writer used, because no reliable source would have listed Dean Harris among the martyrs.

The main error occurs on page 8. "Dr. [George C.] was the first of the group to die." Dr. Harris was seriously ill and went to Nashville to recover but returned to Memphis. Late in December Dean Harris celebrated a Memorial Eucharist at the Cathedral honoring not only the Cathedral's ten martyrs but also all the heroic men and women who fell with them while serving the stricken city. *The Memphis Appeal* carried a long article on the service. The small Cathedral was packed and people stood outside during the long service to show their respect for those who had given their lives in the 1878 epidemic. The Rev. Dr. Harris served as Dean of St. Mary's until 1881. He and his family are well known to historians of the Church in this area. The history of the Martyrs is a precious heritage of the Church at large but especially to the Episcopal Church in Memphis.

I want to express my appreciation for THE ANGLICAN DIGEST's upholding the historic, biblical faith of the Anglican Church.

Sincerely,  
Patricia La Pointe McFarland,  
Germantown, Tennessee



**A PRAYER FOR**

## Pennsylvania

*Bless, Lord, the hilly ramparts, the steep valleys  
and generous plains where by Thy Providence  
Thou didst settle a sturdy race, destined for  
freedom. By inwardness of faith, in openness of  
spirit was the soil prepared, where independence  
might take root, and liberty baptize a nation fit  
for the New World. Grant, O Heavenly  
Father, that they to whom such riches have  
come down may ever be chosen of Thee to be  
builders of Thy commonwealth and bearers of  
Thy peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*



## AND IN ALL PLACES



**WASHINGTON BISHOP JOHN CHANE APPOINTED ED SALMON,** retiring bishop of South Carolina, to provide "supplemental episcopal oversight" to All Saints Church in Chevy Chase, Maryland. "Under this arrangement, Bishop Salmon agreed to visit the parish from time to time..." Chane wrote to All Saints parishioners. "I will continue to make canonical visitations to the Parish and work with candidates for ordination under Bishop Salmon's oversight." Bishop Chane said he has "long respected" Bishop Salmon, and has developed a warm relationship with him during their service together in the House of Bishops. "I believe you will find him to be a reconciling figure in your midst and I bid you to welcome him to your community," he wrote to parishioners. [Bishop Salmon chairs the Board of Trustees of Hillspeak.]

**MORE (MOVEMENT FOR OUTREACH, RENEWAL, AND**

**EVANGELIZATION) MOUNTAIN,** founded near Eureka Springs 30 years ago, was originally affiliated with the Episcopal Church. Today it continues its mission as a ministry of the Brothers and Sisters of Charity. The Little Portion Retreat & Training Center is following in the footsteps through an extensive 2007 Retreat Schedule focusing on prayer and on healing. Whether making a private pilgrimage in solitude and silence or attending one of the challenging retreats offered, you can be a part of a 30 year history of His Story!

Call 479-253-7379 or email [raphaelhs@yahoo.com](mailto:raphaelhs@yahoo.com) for additional history or information on the retreat schedule.

**OPA THANKS** the donor in Tennessee who sent us the purple. They will go to Africa.

**PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI** officially took her seat in Washington National Cathed-

ral on November 5, 2006 in a festal All Saints Sunday Eucharist. Jefferts Schori became the eighth Presiding Bishop to take the official chair in the Cathedral. The 1940 General Convention adopted a recommendation from Virginia Bishop Henry St. George Tucker, elected Presiding Bishop in 1937, suggesting that Washington National Cathedral was the suitable seat for the Presiding Bishop. Tucker was thus seated in 1941 as the first of the eight.

¶ POPE BENEDICT XVI visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the invitation of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, spiritual leader of over 250 million Orthodox worldwide. Pope Benedict spent a day at the Patriarchate celebrating the feast day of St. Andrew the Apostle, who is considered the Patron Saint of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Byzantine name for present-day Istanbul.

¶ BISHOP MARK S. HANSON, presiding bishop of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and president of the Lutheran World Federation, preached a Reformation Day sermon at the historic "Black Church" in Brasov, Transylvania. The Black Church is so named because a fire in the city almost 300 years ago left the exterior stone structure darkened. The church building, one of the largest in Europe, was completed in the 13th century — predating the 16th century Reformation.

¶ DIOCESAN BISHOP DAN HERZOG AND BISHOP SUFFRAGAN DAVE BENA of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany told the members the diocesan Standing Committee that they each intend to retire in early 2007. "We have both prayerfully considered what God's will is, and believe that this is the right time to pass on the apostolic ministry. We have discussed this with Bishop William Love, the Coadjutor of the Diocese, and he is ready to assume leadership as Ninth Bishop of Albany." [Bishop Herzog is a member of the Board of

Trustees of Hillspeak.]

◆ A TIP OF THE BIRETTA TO THE REV. DIANNE G. WARLEY, deacon at St. John's in Niantic, Connecticut. She was with the first Rev. Canon Clinton R. Jones Award in recognition of her commitment to prison ministry. The award was established in 2005 by the Friends of Christ Church Cathedral, in Hartford, Connecticut, to honor an individual whose life and work exemplify values, accomplishments and passions similar to those of Jones, whose 40 years of outreach to people on the margins of society made him a national legend.

◆ THE REV. ENOCK KAYEYE, a Ugandan priest, was consecrated assistant bishop of North Kivu Diocese in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kayeye, 61, is the first foreign and the 11th bishop of the Anglican Church of Congo. The Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Congo, Dr. Dirokpa Fidele, presided over the ceremony at the diocesan headquarters in Butembo town.

## Austin Farrer on Justification and Sanctification

In Christian theological discourse, the noun *justification* means the forgiveness of sins: God acquits us based not on our own good works but rather on the atoning work of Christ. Friendship between God and human beings having been restored, persons can grow within that relationship into what God intends them to be. This process of growth — of being made holy — is called *sanctification*.

Traditionally, Protestants have stressed the grace of justification, and Catholics have stressed the grace of sanctification. This difference in emphasis has usually been reflected more in the questions that Protestants and Catholics have asked than in the answers they have given.

A Protestant would ask, "How can I, a sinner, be accepted (justified) by God?" And the answer: *sola gratia*, by grace alone. That is: by way of the free, unmerited

gift whereby God views me, a sinner, through the lens of Christ and accepts me, just as I am.

The Catholic would have been more prone to ask, "How can I, a sinner, become worthy of standing in the presence of God?" And again, the answer is *sola gratia*, by the free gift of the presence and power of God in Christ working in me to transform me.

Now whenever the English theologian Austin Farrer (1904-68) writes about the forgiveness of sins, he has the history of this distinction in mind. And, like others in the Tractarian tradition (John Henry Newman, in particular), he is invariably concerned to overcome this distinction between justification and sanctification, for he realizes that it is brought about in our minds by our looking at God's work from the human point of view rather than from God's. Always, when Farrer speaks of the "forgiveness of sins," he has more in mind than simply justifica-

tion. For us, justification-sanctification is a two-stage process. For God, it is a unified, comprehensive activity rooted in God's unceasing love for us.

In Farrer's writings, perhaps the most moving and memorable expression of this divine operation is his poetic description of the forgiveness of God in his sermon "All Souls' Examination." God's forgiveness, Farrer says, "does not let me alone ... or let it go at that." Austin Farrer probably would not have made a good frontier revivalist preacher, if the theology of revivalism committed the preacher to believing that grace always descends like a violent thunderstorm in a single, dramatic, emotional, once-for-all experience — and that's it: "I was saved on October 14, 1836!"

Instead, for Farrer, God's grace is constantly present, sustaining us — like the atmosphere around us, which supports life through the air we breathe. And yet not like the atmosphere,

either, for God "is never inert, he is master, he is the sovereign will" — and "he is always at work on me." But, though forgiven, I go on sinning and forgetting God: "I profane and falsify my relation to the well-spring of my life." What does God do? Leave me alone because he has already "saved" me? "If God forgives me while I continue to go to the devil, what shall it profit me? I go to the devil just the same." Again, "God forgives me." And yet again "I go on dying in my wickedness." Again, "God forgives me." How? "With the compassion of his eyes." But "my back is turned to him... I will not turn and have the forgiveness...." "God forgives me, for he takes my head between his hands and turns my face to his to make me smile at him." I "struggle and hurt those hands" — hands "scarred with nails" — but God's hands "do not let me go until he has smiled me into smiling; and that," Farrer says, "is the forgiveness of God." In sum,

When God forgives, he

does not simply pronounce or simply record a sentence; when God forgives, the wellspring of life turns from bitter to sweet, the acid of sin ceases to corrode, and living waters irrigate the soul. We stop shriveling; we begin to grow.

In this sermon Farrer is depicting the forgiveness of sins — justification — in terms appropriate to a description of sanctification. God smiles me into smiling, and that is the forgiveness of God. This forgiveness is an active, ongoing process — the relentless love of God in search of the lost — in which God does not let us alone to be mere passive recipients. What kind of religion — what kind of God — would that be if God did leave us alone?

No doubt we've all experienced forgiveness by others — by friends or relatives or colleagues. It changes us. We are not its passive recipients. We become more grateful, perhaps more generous

toward others, more prone to forgive and to risk loving others. The forgiveness we experience can't be separated from our transformation. Farrer is right not to distinguish justification and sanctification too sharply one from the other. God does not forgive us and walk away, leaving us alone. God is always at work in us, loving us so that we might love. If friendship is restored between God and human beings by the work of Christ, then we live within that friendship, a reconciling community of the reconciled.

Farrer does not rest content even with this portrayal of the intimate union of justification and sanctification, for he cannot talk of these realities without considering the Communion of Saints. In the same sermon quoted above, "All Souls' Examination," Farrer quickly goes on to speak of Christ's body in the world. The "theology of the creeds," notes Farrer, does not allow us, once forgiven, to "creep into a quiet corner" and live out our personal

spirituality, working out our separate peace with God. "You may indeed begin that way, [but] you can't end that way." Instead, "you must come out into the open, you must give yourself up ... for the Christ who turns your face to his own is still in the world, and you must meet him there." Christ is met in his "mystical body, a Catholic Church, a Communion of Saints. And if you will not surrender to his human body, you are not reconciled to his divine person." Christ is met in the water of baptism, in the bread that is his body, and in the "absolution as from his lips." Finally and "above all," Farrer enjoins us, "love the Christians as Christ; for what you are to love in them is Christ—Christ fashioned and growing in them, as he begins also to grow in you."

— Dr. David Hein, Professor and Chair of Religion and Philosophy Hood College, Frederick, Maryland.  
[He is coeditor with E. H. Henderson of *Captured by the Crucified: The Practical Theology of Austin Farrer*, T&T Clark].

## Back to Basics

For most of us, life is really complicated. Over the past forty years, I have experienced an ever-increasing pressure to accomplish more, be more places, and become more informed. In the 1980s, I was impatient to get my first computer. I was rector of a small parish and believed that having a computer would free up several hours a week for more pastoral duties. Finally in 1989, I bought a computer. For sure, I got work done faster.

But, with the advent of personal computers in the office and at home, something else happened. The increased speed and convenience meant that one could accomplish more. Space wasn't actually freed-up; it was simply filled with more things to do. With email in the mid 1990s, communication and expected response time increased exponentially. I am now doing 40 to 60 percent more in a given week than I was when I began ordained ministry. Most of that is

because "turn around time" is almost instantaneous.

There is no need whatever to talk about how busy a priest is. We are *all* busy! As I get around and get to know more folks, the story I hear is very similar: "I wish I had more time . . ."

As theology students at Nashotah House, we prayed the "Prayer for the House" daily at Evensong. In the midst of that prayer was a petition that started, "make us patterns of holiness, simplicity and self-denial." As I prepared to become a priest, those elements seemed exciting. After I became a priest, I quickly realized that the "way of the world" is also the "way of the church." In leading a parish, I'm as engaged in management and details as anyone else. Moreover, I began to understand what was behind being a "pattern." It meant that *all of us* who belong to god in Christ Jesus are called to exercise a life of holiness, simplicity and self-denial.

Lent calls us to seriously ask who we are as Christians. It expects from us a response

about how we live life in Grace. The fact is that, most of the year we tend not to think much about that.

Our brain is the pattern for the computer. The brain is able to generate, receive, process, collate and cross-match data at amazing speeds, while constantly monitoring a complex physiological system. Monitoring both a conscious and unconscious system seems like a daunting task, but it's something we all do constantly, every day.

When we ask for holiness, simplicity and self-denial, just what do we expect? Lent is an important time to learn how we can recognize our innermost selves, the basis of our existence on earth and the ultimate end of our being.

**Holiness.** The psychologist Abraham Maslow talked about human growth in terms of a "hierarchy of needs." As a person gains balance at each level of those needs, he or she comes nearer to the pinnacle of "self-actualization." Here, a person is transparent. Psychiatrist Murray Bowen

called the place where we are most ourselves, "differentiated."

The New Testament calls such a place, "holiness." The more we become the person God has created us to be — the image that is within us from our beginning — the closer we move to holiness. It is not achieved by behaving a certain way, obeying certain rules or following a certain recipe. Holiness means being who we really are.

**Simplicity.** It is truly a gift to be simple. This means being uncomplicated. Like holiness, simplicity means coming to the least common denominator of self. As we grow, we literally put on layers of behaviors, attitudes, and styles which we present to the world. They hide our insecurities, fears, and inhibitions. In our age, the acquisition of commodities replaces the building of forts, castles, and fortresses behind which we can hide. Simplicity involves removing as many of these things as possible in order to be seen just as we are . . . just as God already sees

us. Mostly, it allows us to see ourselves.

**Self-Denial.** As the rock group The Rolling Stones once said, "*You can't always get what you want, but you get what you need.*" And another song in the early 1970s: "*You get what you give; the way you die is the way you live; what you want isn't always what you need. You may want it today, and tomorrow you'll give it away . . . and the only thing that's permanent is change.*" Jesus spoke many times about the effects of anxiety on what we think we need, and the importance in trusting God's capacity to provide. Self-denial is the act of: asking, "What are the basic needs for my life, my work and my family?" and acting on the answers to meet those basic needs.

Self-denial is really just getting back to the basics.

Dave Ramsey is a Christian who made a fortune, lost the fortune, and has come back with a whole new perspective. I am now working on his book *Total Money Makeover*. My goal is to practice and pattern holiness, simplicity,

and self-denial in this most important area of identity. This is just one of many places we can start in taking this journey.

We do not have to be monastic or sell all we own in order to be alive and joy-filled Christians. We can live in an abundance of blessing by living lives that are balanced and rooted in the disciplines of holiness, simplicity and self-denial. In these forty days of Lent, I invite you to consider these questions:

Who are you as God's Child?

What do you need to remove from yourself in order to see yourself — and be seen — as God sees you?

What do you need to "let go of" in order to feel free and alive in Christ Jesus?

As we explore these questions, we will begin to see ourselves and the world around us a bit differently. We will come to Easter as newly alive.

— The Rev. Frederick Mann,  
St. Andrew's,  
Kansas City, Missouri

## Kingdom of God

I subscribe to the theological school of thought that believes in the "ontological priesthood." The thinking here is that an ordained priest is a priest forever, ordination changes the priest's very being. One way of saying this is that indelible mark is placed on the soul. In the words of the psalmist, "*Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizédek.*" As a priest I am not just a functionary; I am not a priest because I perform priestly functions. If that were the case, then if I quit St. Michael's Episcopal Church for a career as a bricklayer then at some point I would cease to be a priest since I ceased functioning as a priest. Or similarly, if you went into my office, put on all of the vestments for Holy Eucharist, if you stood at the altar and said all of the right prayers and performed all of the correct manual acts then since you functioned as a priest one would conclude you must be a priest. But, that is not how it works. Even if you completed all the seminary classes for a

M. Div. degree, even if you lived a sober, honest and godly life, even if every one in the congregation agreed you would make a great priest, and even if you dressed up investments and celebrated a flawless Holy Eucharist, at the end of the day you would still not be a priest. The bread and wine on the altar would still be bread and wine and not the Body and Blood of Christ because the ordained priesthood is more than just a role. A priest is a priest because the church through the office of the Bishop has ordained a person to Holy Orders. God marks that person as a priest. The priesthood is no longer what that person does but who that person is. I am not the only one in this congregation with an indelible mark on my soul. All who are baptized receive an indelible mark on their soul. "*You are marked as Christ's own forever.*" A Christian is more than what you do, it is who you are. It is an ontological change that affects your very being. You are a new creation. When I say that being a Christian, being a priest makes a person

different, I mean that in a profound, supernatural way. It is an ontological difference.

I admit that you may have some difficulty with these philosophical, theological categories. Members of the Baptist Church do not believe that baptism leaves an indelible mark on the soul so they permit re-baptism. They believe Christians can backslide from being a Christian — become unchristian and need re-baptizing. Many denominations re-ordain their ministers if they return to church ministry after a lengthy period of time in a secular career. But, our church believes that ordination and baptism can only be performed once because the sacrament has an eternal affect.

Let me now say that with these two limited exceptions that I hold to be part of our true Faith of the Church, nothing else that separates us in this life is of any theological importance. Or, to say that another way, in the Kingdom of God we will all be the same; not the same identity but the

same ontologically. In the Kingdom of God you will still be you. Actually, you will be more you than you have ever been. You will be you in the fullness of your being and I will be me in the fullness of my identity. But, in the Kingdom of God we will be the same ontologically and in every way possible.

This is important to understand, but understanding this may lead to difficulty; it may be painful to grasp. In the Kingdom of God every human being has the same value as every other human being. In the Kingdom of God, equality of being will last for eternity.

Re-read the passage from Isaiah (35:1-10) with this insight and you will begin to understand the prophecy of God's coming Kingdom. Isaiah is telling us that in the Kingdom of God those things that separate us in this current manifestation of creation will cease to exist. The weak will be strengthened, the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will be able to jump as

high as anyone, the speechless man or woman will sing with the voice of the greatest vocalist. Do I need to go on form Isaiah to state the obvious? No one owns anything in the Kingdom, so there is no rich, no poor. What we now see through a glass darkly will, in the Kingdom be revealed to everyone, so there will not be smart people or slow and dull people in the Kingdom. In the Kingdom beauty will be measured by love and love will overflow. Do you understand what I am saying? The differences we have in this world will cease to exist in the Kingdom. In the Kingdom, age will be meaningless as eternity commences. The infant that left this world too soon and the person who lived a hundred years then died will be indistinguishable in the Kingdom. All earthly separations will be bridged. In the heavenly choir, you may sit next to a president, a pope, a billionaire, a movie star, or a Hall of Famer. You may just as likely sit to a slave, a prisoner, a beggar, a welfare mother, or an inmate from the mental hospital.

Inside the Kingdom of God it will not matter where your political loyalty was. There are not Blue states or Red states in the Kingdom. Who your parents were will not matter. How good your parents were at parenting will not matter. Child and parent and husband and wife will be differences without meaning. In the Kingdom of God, the inequalities, prejudices, power structures, and barriers are forever erased.

Jesus came into the world to proclaim, "*The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Good News.*" That is our proclamation to the world. That is what Jesus wanted communicated to John the Baptist in prison as we read in today's Gospel. Jesus tells John's disciples to go to John the baptist and tell him what they see, the leveling of the differences in this world. The blind see, the deaf hear, lepers are cleansed, the lame are walking and the poor are receiving good news. Jesus is the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God in this world. So why do we continue

to treat one another differently, often cruelly? We do it because it is painful for us to change.

Permit me a story, painful story, from my youth. Let me tell you about my Dad; I love my Dad. Although he has been dead for over a dozen years my love for him grows every time I realize how much he gave to me. This is not to dismiss that my Father was a hard man. He was smart but uneducated. He was forced to leave school in his sophomore year in high school when his family left Independence, Louisiana and moved to Chicago. He lacked many verbal skills and too often when he could not express himself he let his anger overtake him. My sisters and I joked about it now, that our father's idea of good parenting held up his pants most of the day.

Physical discipline was not unknown in my house. When I was 18 my father and I really got into it; I forgot about what now. The argument escalated

and my father lost control of his anger and slapped me. For the first time in my life I made a fist and reared back for a punch. But, you know I could not hit my father. However, when he saw my fist it made him angrier. I could not hit my father, but I was not willing to be hit again, either. I grabbed his arms. We commenced to roll around until my stepmother came into my room and pulled my father away. I left two black and blue marks on his arms where I had been holding him. Also, I left the house for about two weeks and stayed with my sister. When I returned home, I noticed that things had changed between my father and me. Instead of the parental demands I had grown up with, I was now getting fatherly advice. Looking back on that situation, I know it was painful for my father to admit that I had become a man. A young man for sure, but definitely no longer a child. Things had changed.

All of us, if we are to claim the Christianity we espouse

must begin to live in the Kingdom of God. We must begin to eradicate the non-essential barriers we have constructed to separate us one from the other. I have no illusion that sometimes it will be difficult to live for the Kingdom of God and live in this sinful and broken world. The world celebrates those who make their mark, who separate themselves from the herd, who rise to the top. The world celebrated differences. The Kingdom of God teaches us too boldly say "Our Father." Several years ago, I read an article about apartheid in South Africa. There was law in South Africa that forbade black Africans to say "Our Father" when praying with white Africans. In the Kingdom of God, I will love my neighbor as myself: Another person just like me, neither above me or below me, not pastor nor servant, not parent nor child. Someone just like me, just like you. Christ own forever.

— The Rev. Roy G. Pollina,  
St. Michael's,  
Mandeville, Louisiana

### *From the Editor...*

## *God Inspired Dreamers Of Great Dreams*

Ever have someone capture your imagination? Really grab a hold of you so you could not let what they said go?

I had a sports coach like that in high school once. "Make no little plans for there is no magic in them to stir people's souls," he insisted. Before long, he was challenging me to consider trying out for the varsity team at my high school. In this sport my school's team had won the national championship a couple of years before. I thought he had lost his mind at first — but he hooked me. My life was really changed because he taught me to dream big dreams.

Jesus was the ultimate captivator of human beings and their imaginations. He talked of the Kingdom of God — nothing less than God's reign in our midst. Living water, he said. The bread of life. By the time he

was finished with one woman he met she had evangelized an entire village. Come and see a man who told me all that I ever did (and graciously loved me anyway). Wow!

All this was brought to mind recently when I was following my daily ritual, after completing morning devotions, of reading the *New York Times* (a paper in one hand and a Bible in the other, Karl Barth once said. I hope you discover the joy of doing both daily).

On this particular day a front-page story in the *Times* appeared about a plan to give a 150-dollar computer to all the children in the two-thirds world. This was the brain-child of Nicholas Negroponte, founding director of the M.I.T. media laboratory. The article went on to spell out how, in spite of opposition from Microsoft and Intel, as well as a number of educators, it just might happen. The machine can run just on sunlight. It doesn't even have a hard drive. Holy cow!

Where are the disciples of Jesus with big ideas — ideas like this? If I look around I see Tim Keller seeking to engross New York, I watch Rick Warren trying to persuade America, and I read of Benedict XVI trying to captivate Europe. It is no accident that these figures are from evangelicalism and Roman Catholicism because at present the future of Christianity in the West lies there and only there.

Yet it is not too late for the mainline churches to participate in such a challenging and wonderful future. It can only happen when we are recaptured by our Lord and his gospel that seeks to bring the whole truth of God to every whole person throughout the whole world.

Wouldn't it be fantastic if some Anglicans produced a few shockingly big ideas instead of the stale, dry-as-dust humdrum that passes for being acceptable in so many of our parishes? By the grace of God may it be so.

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